

The Lord's Army

Week 43: October 22-28 — *Titus 1-3; 2 Timothy 1-4*

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Helpful Resources

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.59)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

When I was a child, I was taught this song, "I may never march in the infantry, ride in the cavalry, shoot the artillery. I may never fly over the enemy, but I'm in the Lord's Army!" While I didn't understand its meaning at the time, I got the point. I'm in the Lord's Army, and so are you. But where did that idea come from, and what does that entail? That is the purpose of this week's review.

In *2 Timothy 2:3*, Paul challenged his young protégé to be "a good soldier of Christ." As Christians, we are soldiers in the Army of the Lord. All soldiers endure basic training. They are given a weapon and are taught how to use it effectively. Soldiers are briefed on the mission and the strategies for accomplishing victory. Eventually, they are assigned a post and given orders. In the end, soldiers are evaluated based on their performance and rewarded accordingly. Let's consider these phases in the life of a soldier of Christ.

- You're in the Army Now!

As God's elect, we were drafted into His Army before creation (*Ti. 1:1; Eph. 1:4, 5*). He sent out the call, and we responded (*Rom. 8:29*). He even paid our way through the blood of His Son, "redeeming us from every lawless deed (sin), to purify for Himself a people for His own possession..." (*Ti. 2:14; 3:5-7; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:19*). We belong to the Lord.

- Basic Training

Every soldier receives basic training, to ensure that he or she is fit for combat. That training begins in the home (*2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15*). Then, God provides key individuals to train and mentor us (*2 Tim. 1:1-6; 2:1, 7; 3:10, 11*). Who was it for you? He has even provided spiritual disciplines for the purpose of godliness, that we might make ourselves "useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (*1 Tim. 4:7, 8; 2 Tim. 2:15, 20, 21, 22*).

- A Soldier's Weapon

All soldiers are armed with weapons for their battle with the enemy. "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (*2 Cor. 10:3-5*). "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness..." (*Eph. 6:12*). Therefore, God supplies us with spiritual armor (*Eph. 6:13-18*).

Among the weapons that the Lord provides us (i.e., Holy Spirit, prayer), He gave us the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (*Eph. 6:17*). One of the spiritual disciplines that is necessary in a soldier's life is Scripture intake. We must be competent with our weapon, and competency takes practice (*2 Tim. 2:15*). When did your desire for God's Word begin?

For all Scripture is “profitable for training in righteousness, so that the man (or woman) of God may be adequate and equipped...” (2 *Tim.* 3:16, 17). We must be proficient with this weapon, for unarmed soldiers are vulnerable to attack and easily taken captive (*Col.* 4:8).

- The Mission and Strategy

Every soldier in the Lord’s Army has the same mission — to share the gospel of Christ. We are to “go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them to observe all that the Lord commanded...” (*Matt.* 28:19, 20). Likewise, our strategy is similar — good works (*Ti.* 3:1, 2, 8; 2 *Tim.* 2:21-26; 3:17; *Matt.* 5:16). We love others as Christ has loved us. We treat others as we want to be treated, and we look to serve others as the hands and feet of Christ. By our love and good works, we will have opportunities to share the good news of salvation.

It is important that we keep our mission in mind, for it motivates us to do what is necessary, to endure whatever comes, and to persevere to the end. We must also remember that our cause is bigger than any one person, one church, or one nation (2 *Tim.* 2:8-10). Furthermore, true soldiers view themselves as expendable for the completion of the mission (2 *Cor.* 12:15). The mission is worth every sacrifice that we may encounter.

- Our Post and Orders

While the mission and strategy are the same for every soldier in the Lord’s Army, our posts may be different. The Lord, in His wisdom, providentially places us in different locations, positions, and situations. Our orders are to use our interests, abilities, resources, and giftings to the best of our ability and achieve the mission (*Ti.* 1:1-5; 2:9, 10; 2 *Tim.* 1:1, 14). Along the way, we will most certainly endure hardships, suffering, and even persecution for the Lord’s sake (2 *Tim.* 1:8, 12; 2:9; 3:12). We are all called to do our duty without fear or passivity, but with confidence and power (2 *Tim.* 1:6-8; 4:1, 2). Are you doing your duty?

- Performance Evaluation

After our time in the Lord’s Army is over and our work on earth is done, we will stand before God and give an account of our time in His service (*Rom.* 14:12; 1 *Cor.* 3:10-15; *Heb.* 9:27). Did we stay focused on the mission (2 *Tim.* 2:4), or did we get distracted with the world or our agenda? Paul challenged Timothy to fulfill his ministry (2 *Tim.* 4:1-5). Then he gave him the example of his own life (2 *Tim.* 4:6-8). He had fought the good fight, kept the faith, and finished the course (v.7).

While our goal is one day to hear the Lord say to us, “Well done, you good and faithful soldier (servant),” Paul looked forward to something else even more. “In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (v.8; see also 2 *Tim.* 1:12; 4:1, 7, 8, 18, 19; 2:12; *Ti.* 2:13).

The Bottom Line

We are soldiers in the Lord’s Army — equipped, engaged, and expendable. Let us do our duty well.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the most difficult aspect of being a soldier in the Lord’s Army?
2. What is required of you to finish your service in the Army well?